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NATURAL NUDES SCULPTED NATURALLY

Natural Nudes

Sculpted Naturally

The fascinating thing about the Venus de Milo is that despite having been sculpted over 2,000 years ago, and despite the loss of her arms, as you move around the sculpture every aspect seems constantly in motion, ever changing her aspect and her look. As ancient as is the sculpture, and as long ago as that face and body were locked in marble, this sense of change and motion, this naturalness, gives the Venus a sense of being a contemporary – not of ancient Greece, but of the modern world.

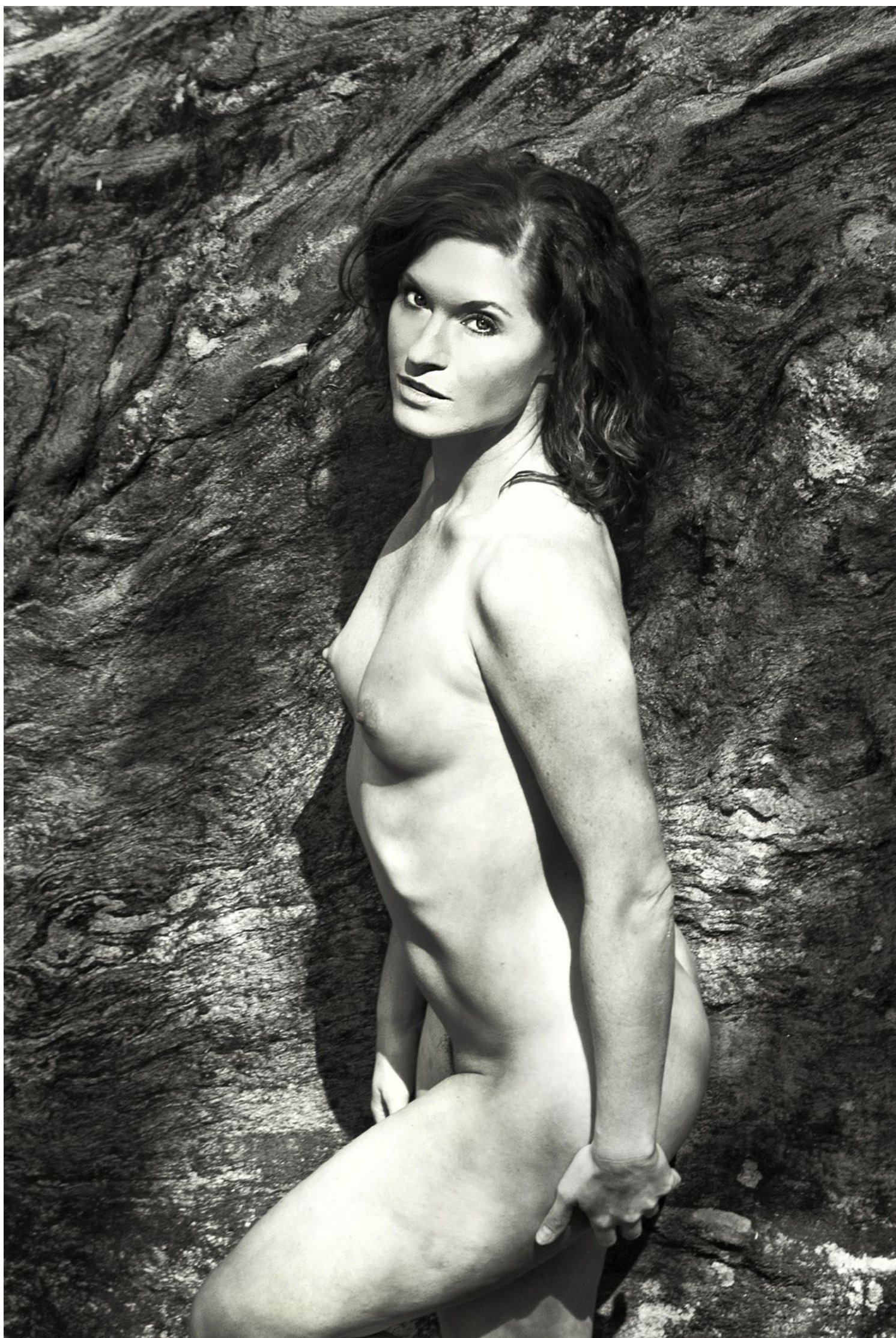
Great sculpture of the human face and human form is not an art form which freezes its subjects in time. Rodin's *The Thinker* is each of us, immersed in our own, very current thoughts. Michelangelo's *David* remains very much the idealized image of today's man. Lincoln, in his Memorial, is clearly listening, speaking to each visitor who seeks his guidance or brings him their happiness or woe. And Venus, with her body slightly turned, her chin firm, her gaze looking fully ahead, her lips poised slightly skeptically, she is as much a woman of the 21st Century as she is Aphrodite of 100 BC.

The images in this issue of *Au Naturel* were made over a period of many years. I found quite a few in files that I had gone over many times. Yet, as always happens, I found photographs that I liked that I had previously overlooked. To my eye, in no case did the images look dated, or anything less than a fresh capture. They certainly have not lasted as long as Venus, Lincoln, David or *The Thinker*, but they do have a sense of timelessness about them.

It starts with the women – nude, with minimal if any makeup, in natural light and asked only to move freely while I count on wide open apertures and bracketed shutter speeds to capture the instant in which beauty moves beyond transient. That those turned out to be the instants in which each woman posed most like sculpture, those were instants truly *Au Naturel*.



CANDACE ON THE ROCKS — 1



CANDACE ON THE ROCKS — 2



CANDACE ON THE ROCKS — 3



CANDACE ON THE ROCKS — — THE MERMAID — 4



CASS — SUNBEAM CATCHER — 1

AU NATUREL — NO. 6



CASS — SUNBEAM CATCHER — 2



CASS — SUNBEAM CATCHER — 3

AU NATUREL — NO. 6



CASS — SUNBEAM CATCHER — 4



ELENA — MARBLE ON A GLACIAL ERRATIC



ELENA — SCULPTED PERFECTION



ELENA — THE SENTINEL



GIA — 1

AU NATUREL — NO. 6



GIA — 2

AU NATUREL — NO. 6



GRETCHEN — STATUESQUE — 1



GRETCHEN — STATUESQUE — 2



GRETCHEN — STATUESQUE — 3



GRETCHEN — STATUESQUE — 4



IVY — CAST IN HUDSON RIVER MUD



IVY — SAND CASTING



IVY — SAW MILL RIVER MERMAID — 1



IVY — SAW MILL RIVER MERMAID — 2



JACS — — NUDE ON A PEDESTAL



KATIE — A ROCK IS A ROCK IS A PLINTH



KATIE — HOMAGE A RODIN



KATIE — SUN SCULPTED — 1



KATIE — SUN SCULPTED — 2



KEIRA GRANT — HOMAGE A GUTZON BURGLOM



KEIRA GRANT — MONUMENTAL — 1



KEIRA GRANT — MONUMENTAL — 2



KEIRA GRANT — ROCK HARD ON HARD ROCK



KERRY — AWAITING THE SCULPTOR



KERRY — STATUESQUE DEFINED — 1



KERRY — STATUESQUE DEFINED — 2



KERRY — STILL LIFE



REBECCA — FROZEN MOMENTUM



REBECCA — PETRIFIED WOODS



REBECCA — — MOUNTING HER PLINTH



RIA 1



RIA 2



RUBY SLIPPER — — PREENING IN THE SUNBEAM



RUBY SLIPPER — — PUT ON A PEDESTAL



VERA JULIETTE — A LA MODE ELEGANCE



VERA JULIETTE — ANGLES — 1



VERA JULIETTE — ANGLES — 2



VERA JULIETTE — ANGLES — 3



VERA JULIETTE — FORM STUDY — 1



VERA JULIETTE — FORM STUDY — 2



VERA JULIETTE — GOT YOUR BACK



VERA JULIETTE — LIMBER



VERA JULIETTE — OPENNESS



VERA JULIETTE — STILL LIFE WITH WHITE ORCHID — 1



VERA JULIETTE — STILL LIFE WITH WHITE ORCHID — 2

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I call my work "Au Naturel." It does NOT mean only "nude" or "naked." It means in nature, in the simplest manner, without makeup or plumage. My work seeks to capture the emotional and physical implications of being nude in settings that are challenging and not without risk. I care as much about what a woman's face tells us about the experience as I do about her form and I hope that it shows in these images.

Whether the images were created outdoors in my favorite places or in my studios in Connecticut and Maine – my earliest partners in making beautiful images taught me to "let it come naturally." I do not "pose" the women with whom I am privileged to work, or ask that they do their hair or apply more than minimal makeup. I show them the place and the direction of the light, put some Vivaldi on the player and ask my partners to be who they want to be in the moment we are at. In the instants before and after they come to that point, that is when their true feelings are exposed and their beauty and emotions the most natural.

Prints of most of my work are available through my website – www.samdavidphotography.com or you may contact me for custom printing or to schedule a photographic session at sam.david.photo@gmail.com. Enjoy my work. Let it come naturally.

SAM DAVID

ABOUT MY PHOTOGRAPHY

As I move into “the rest of my life” I am fulfilling my promise to my family and myself to do the things I always said I would do when I had the time. For many years, I worked with major corporations, helping them craft their messages. I needed to do something that expressed my own message – something creative, challenging, risky and representing my own aesthetic.

I always loved photography, particularly photographing beautiful women in natural light. That is what I first learned to do in Chicago with Norris McNamara, whose fame as a photographer was hard won covering the Civil Rights movement in the South in the 1960's. Norris had the amazing ability to put himself in danger as his subjects faced danger, and brought that sense of risk to the portfolios he shot for beautiful young models as he recovered from his travels in his studio in Chicago on Friday afternoons. I was lucky enough to be his client, and his friend.

Norris taught me what he called his three basic rules of photography – if you don't have your camera you can't take the picture; film (now digital memory) is cheap; and it's all about seeing the light. If you accepted and obeyed all three, chances were you were going to make a good picture.

It took me twenty five years after leaving Norris's studio before I had the time to apply his three rules to the pictures I wanted to make. One key thing I had observed was that a model's headshot was always better – at least to my aesthetic – if she was made to undress before the images were made. Without plumage, in an unfamiliar environment, the real woman – not the posed one, not the one with the look she thought was “right” – was exposed, and it was almost always beautiful. And I also observed that the real benefit of bracketing was not the “perfect” exposure, it was that the best image was taken ¼ of a second before or ¼ of a second after the model posed, again because the camera would catch her at her most natural.

The next step was to take it outdoors. I had always been fascinated by nudes, particularly nudes in nature. Stripped of plumage, challenged by the environment and illuminated only with natural light there is less posing and far more the model becoming herself and a partner in the creative process, particularly as the session moves on. Each image stops life as it is in the instant it is taken, but, if the image is successful, that unposed instant carries with it not just the now, but the past and the future that is the full beauty of the woman. Why? Because we let it come naturally.